

## Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A loop means for pointing devices for guiding a cursor on a computer screen or the like, comprising:

a flexible support material in the form of a cylinder having a longitudinal axis and capable of being axially moved and circumferentially rotated around two axially oriented supports that extend parallel to the longitudinal axis for stretching a cross-section of the loop to an oval shape,

said flexible support material having a number of mutually circumferentially spaced, axially elongated, stiffening strips or equivalent means substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis for stiffening the loop means in its axial direction, said stiffening strips or equivalent means each having a circumferential width, and said stiffening strips or equivalent means having an axial length greater than the collective circumferential widths of a plurality of stiffening strips or equivalent means; and

a friction material on an external surface of the flexible support material, said friction material having a significantly varying thickness at different places measured outwards from the external surface of the flexible support material.

2. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein longitudinal zones defined by and between the strips have friction material, and the friction material within the longitudinal zones is less than an average concentration of the friction material on the external surface of the flexible support material.

3. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the friction material is arranged substantially in the form of friction strips above the stiffening strips.

4. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop means according to claim 2, wherein the friction material is arranged essentially in the form of friction islands above the strips.

5. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the flexible support material is formed by a substantially rectangular support material joined together to form a cylinder, and at least a portion of the joint is situated over one of the strips.

6. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the support material consists of fabric.

7. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop means according to claim 6, wherein the support material's individual threads are arranged at an angle of at least 20 and at most 70 degrees to the strips.

8. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop means according to claims 6, wherein the cloth has a distance D between the individual threads, where D is larger than 0.05 millimetre on the average.

9. (withdrawn/ previously presented) The loop means according to claim 8, wherein the cloth is a Georgette type of fabric.

10. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the friction material containing small reflecting particles that are separated sufficiently to give rise to individual light points on the detector chip of an optical detector such as a HDNS 2000 or the like.

11. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the stiffening strips or equivalent means includes stiffening strips.

12. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the stiffening strips are provided on a side of the flexible support material opposite the friction material.

13. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the axial length of the stiffening strips is considerably greater than the circumferential width of the stiffening strips.

14. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein longitudinal zones defined by and between the strips have friction material, and the friction material within the longitudinal zones is less than an average concentration of the friction material on the external surface of the flexible support material.

15. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the friction material is arranged substantially in the form of friction strips aligned with the stiffening strips.

16. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the friction material is arranged essentially in the form of friction islands above the strips.

17. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the flexible support material is formed by a substantially rectangular strip of flexible support material joined together to form a cylinder, and at least a portion of the joint is situated over one of the stiffening strips.

18. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 11, wherein the support material consists of fabric.

19. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 18, wherein the support material's individual threads are arranged at an angle of at least 20 and at most 70 degrees to the stiffening strips.

20. (previously presented) The loop means according to claim 1, wherein the friction material is coated on the external surface of the flexible support material.